1795

REMARKS

ON

MR. DICK'S SERMON,

CONCERNING THE

QUALIFICATIONS AND CALL

OF

MISSIONARIES,

PREACHED BEFORE

THE EDINBURGH MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

On Tuesday, March 31. 1801.

BY GREVILLE EWING.

Hold fast the form of sound words.
What saith the Scripture?

GLASGOW:

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ON

MR. DICK'S SERMON.

EVERY attentive reader of this well written diſcourſe, muſt be ſtruck with the difference, between the doctrine of the preacher, and the practice of the Society before whom he delivered his ſentiments. After the reſolution of thanks, and requeſt that the Sermon might be printed, conſiſtency would have required a propoſal, that the Society ſhould ſubjoin a recantation of their errors, and an exhortation to the public, to give them no more aid, till they ſhould effect a material alteration of their plan. Upon comparing the Sermon, acknowledged by the Society to be excellent, with the report of the Directors which follows, one cannot but remember poor Richard's remark concerning the ſage quotations that had been made from his Almanack. "The old gentleman, ſays he, "ended his harangue. The people heard it, and approved the "doctrine, and immediately practiſed the contrary, juſt as if it "had been a common Sermon."

But if the doctrine of the preacher be right, by all means let the practice of the Society be condemned. The following remarks are not made with a deſire of vindicating the Society, further than their conduct may be found to be countenanced by the word of God. The members, who were preſent, had, no doubt, their reaſons for approving of what they had heard. Members, who can ſeldom attend, eſpecially thoſe who live at a diſtance, may not

be competent judges of every ſtep of the Society's procedure. It is not to the Society therefore, but to the Sermon which they have publiſhed for their benefit, that our attention is now to be turned. A Sermon, when publiſhed, is ſubmitted to univerſal examination; and if aſſertions, contained in it, ſhall appear to any man, to be unwarrantable, or of dangerous tendency, he has a right, publicly, to call them in queſtion.

Aſſerting this right for myſelf, I beg leave, at the ſame time, to premiſe, that for the talents and character of Mr. Dick, I have the moſt ſincere reſpect. Though I have never had the pleaſure of his converſation, or of hearing him preach, I have ſeen his late excellent Eſſay on the Inſpiration of the Scriptures, and have ever ſince warmly recommended it, to all who wiſh for information on ſo important a ſubject. In what follows, I find no fault with the Preacher, but only with his ſyſtem. I wiſh to confine the reader's attention ſimply to the matter in debate, and, while I uſe great plainneſs of ſpeech, as to the argument; if a ſingle ſentiment or expreſſion like want of politeneſs, or fretfulneſs at another man's liberty of conſcience, ſhould eſcape me, it is what I do not intend, and I ſhall certainly be ready, upon conviction, to acknowledge my error, and to aſk pardon.

Our Author thinks, "there can be no diſpute about the text." (Acts xiii. 2. P. 4.) The text is indeed ſo very plain, that it would ſeem, as if there needed to be no diſpute about it. But of diſputation many are the cauſes, beſides obſcurity; and we often find difference of opinion actually exiſting, where it was leaſt to have been expected. This is remarkably the caſe, in expoſitions of Scripture, and particularly of this very text, about the meaning of which our Author is ſo confident. Thus, the phraſe, which our tranſlators very properly render, "As they "miniſtered to the Lord," *Eraſmus* renders, "*Cum autem illi* "*ſacrificarent Domino.*" Improving upon ſo laudable an example, *Corbin*, in his French verſion, rendered the paſſage, "*Eux cele-* "*brans le ſaint ſacrifice de la meſſe*;" and after him, Father *Veron*, "*Les Apôtres celebroient la meſſe au Seigneur.**" The reaſon which *Veron* offers for tranſlating it in this manner, is

* See Campbell's Preliminary Diſſertations, p. 537.

becauſe the Calviniſts had often aſked him in what paſſage of Scripture it was mentioned that the Apoſtles ever ſaid maſs. That Father, that he might not again be at a loſs for an anſwer to ſuch troubleſome queriſts as he had found in thoſe diſciples of Calvin, was reſolved that, whether the maſs had a place in the original or not, or even in the Vulgate (the authorized verſion of the Church of Rome) it ſhould ſtand forth conſpicuous in his tranſlation, ſo that no perſon could miſtake it. We may perhaps be diſpoſed to laugh at this man now, as if he had been merely a bigotted ſimpleton. But we may depend upon it, this was by no means the caſe. Whatever might be his bigotry, he wanted not ſufficient addreſs to preach to the times, to gain the approbation of his brethren, and to ſecure not only the literary, but the lucrative honours, which a proud and opulent hierarchy had it in their power to beſtow. It appears from the title of his book, that he was, "Docteur en Theologie, Predicateur et Lecteur du Roi "pour les controverſes, Deputé par Nos-ſeigneurs du Clergé, "pour ecrire ſur icelles." And to ſhew of what conſequence he thought theſe particulars were to qualify him as a tranſlator, he obſerves in his preface, that, "the quality of holy writ well "deſerves, on ſeveral important accounts, that its tranſlators "ſhould be Doctors in Theology, and eſpecially well verſed in "controverſies."

Neither ſhall we find greater harmony reſpecting the principal clauſe in the text, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work "whereunto I have called them." Mr. Dick tells us, (and I confeſs many Doctors in Theology are of the ſame opinion) that here, "a command is given to the prophets and teachers in the "church *of* Antioch, to *ſet apart* two perſons, eminently quali- "fied for the work which the Holy Ghoſt had aſſigned to them, "of promulgating the goſpel among the heathens." By the phraſe *ſetting apart*, he avowedly means ordination by the church, to the work of the miniſtry. Now, after all the attention I have been able to give to the paſſage, I am either ſo ſtupid, perhaps, or ſo perverſe, as to aſſert, in direct contradiction of our Author, (and there are Doctors in Theology on my ſide too*) that his text does not ſpeak one ſingle ſyllable on the ſubject of ordination at all.

* Doctors Whitby, Doddridge, and Macknight in his life of Paul.

The expreſſion, " Separate me," which is the text, and " ſet apart," or, " ſolemnly ſet apart," which are the paraphraſes, will not be found altogether ſynonymous. It remains to be conſidered, whether the Holy Ghoſt meant, " Separate me Barnabas " and Saul from your company, that they may go elſewhere to " the diſtant work to which I have called them:" or, whether he meant, " Ordain them to that work." The following are all the other places in the New Teſtament in which the word here rendered, *ſeparate*, occurs: Matth xiii. 49. and xxv. 32. Luke vi. 22. Acts xix. 9. Rom. i. 1. 2 Cor. vi. 17. Gal. i. 15. and ii. 12. I leave it with the reader to judge, from the plain ſignification of the word, and its general application in the above paſſages, which of the meanings ſtated is likely to be the true one. I am aware that in Rom. i. 1. the word means ſelection, or appointment, or, if you will, ordination, to the work of the goſpel; but not the ordination treated of in the Sermon before us. It is the ordination of God, which Paul, in Gal. i. 15. expreſsly oppoſes to ordination by the church. The diſtinction he is there making is not between himſelf, and " a miſſionary *merely* of men;" (P. 25.) but between himſelf and a miſſionary of men, in any ſenſe whatever. " Paul an apoſtle, ſays he, not of men, neither " by man, but by Jeſus Chriſt, and God the Father." And, in verſes, 15, 16, 17. " But when it pleaſed God, who *ſeparated* " *me* FROM MY MOTHER'S WOMB, and called me by his grace, to " reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the hea- " then; immediately I conferred not with fleſh and blood," (i. e. I did not immediately conſult with man) " neither went I up to " Jeruſalem to them which were apoſtles before me," &c. It is remarkable that wherever ordination, by the inſtrumentality of man is ſpoken of, the words are quite different from that which is uſed in the text before us; whereas when any word at all related to the one in the text occurs, in the ſenſe of ordination, it uniformly ſignifies the ordination or ſovereign appointment of God. For the truth of this obſervation, thoſe who are acquainted with the original may examine the following paſſages: Acts xiv. 23. Tit. i. 5. and compare them with Luke xxii. 22. Acts ii. 23. and iv. 28. and x. 42. and xvii. 26, 31. Rom. i. 4. and viii. 29, 30. 1 Cor. ii. 7. Eph. i. 5, 11. Heb. iv. 7.

But the meaning of our text may be eaſily aſcertained, without the aid of verbal criticiſm. I never can make any thing of a paſſage of ſcripture, unleſs I attend to its connection, and therefore beg leave to quote the three firſt verſes of the chapter at once. "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain "prophets and teachers; as BARNABAS, and Simeon that was "called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had "been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and SAUL. As "they miniſtered to the Lord, and faſted, the Holy Ghoſt ſaid, "Separate me BARNABAS and SAUL for the work whereunto I "have called them. And when they had faſted and prayed, and "laid their hands on them, they ſent them away." When Paul had to write about ſome prophets and teachers in the church at Corinth, he ſays, 1 Cor. iv. 6. "Theſe things, brethren, I "have in a figure transferred to myſelf, and to Apollos, for your "ſakes." Perhaps it may tend to elucidate the paſſage under review, if we be permitted to make a ſimilar transference; and let it be made to a body of men as nearly agreeing as poſſible, at leaſt in their official character, to Mr. Dick's notion of the prophets and teachers in the church that was at Antioch. Take then the liſt of the clergy of Edinburgh, as it is given in the Almanack of the preſent year, and ſuppoſe the hiſtory to run thus: "Now there were in the church that was at Edinburgh, certain "prophets and teachers; as

"HUGH BLAIR, D. D.	"William Simpſon,
"James Finlayſon, D. D.	"John Kemp, D. D.
"Henry Grieve, D. D.	"Tho. Davidſon, D. D.
"Andrew Brown, D. D.	"John Erſkine, D. D.
"David Dickſon,	"John Inglis,
"William Gloag, D. D.	"David Black,
"George Baird, D. D.	"John Thomſon, D. D. and
"Andrew Hunter, D. D.	"W. MOODIE, D. D.

"As they miniſtered to the Lord, and faſted, the Holy Ghoſt "ſaid, Separate me HUGH BLAIR and W. MOODIE, for the "work whereunto I have called them. And when they had faſt-"ed, and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they ſent them "away." Would any man, taking this paſſage for his text, ſay, that it contained a command to the prophets and teachers in the

church *of* Edinburgh, to ordain the ſaid HUGH BLAIR and W. MOODIE, or even to recogniſe and confirm their ordination? (P 27.) How ſhould they ordain men who were ordained already? For recogniſing and confirming their ordination, there might have been ſome cauſe, had they been newly received as proſelytes from another church, or even if they had been *tranſported* (the technical term in this country for removal to a new living) from ſome other ſettlement in the ſame church; but to think of recogniſing and confirming the ordination of men, whoſe names ſtood in the roll, who had long been numbered with the reſt of their colleagues, whoſe ordination was in fact recogniſed in every meeting, and every act of the ſociety, and who had been before employed in ſimilar work to that to which they were now called, ſeems altogether unaccountable. The hiſtory certainly ſays no more than this, that HUGH BLAIR and W. MOODIE, being called away from the church that was at Edinburgh upon a miſſion to the heathen, (a buſineſs in which they had already been tried, and which they were well known to have greatly at heart) their brethren were commanded to acquieſce in the diſpenſation, and to ſend them away for that important undertaking; and that accordingly they did ſo, in a very affectionate and pious manner, expreſſing their tenderneſs at parting, and the intereſt they felt in their ſafety, comfort, and ſucceſs in the intended miſſion, by faſting, prayer, and laying on of hands. The laſt mentioned circumſtance gives no countenance to the dream about ordination; for whether impoſition of hands be a rite, which belonged eſſentially to ordination or not, it unqueſtionably was not confined to ordination.

The application of theſe remarks muſt be obvious to every one, who obſerves the names of Barnabas and Saul among the prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch, who conſiders how long they had officiated there (Acts xi. 26.) and how extenſively and ſucceſsfully they had laboured as Miſſionaries before they came there. If it ſtill be poſſible to doubt, we may remark further, that Paul and his fellow labourers, were ſeparated, as in the text, to Miſſionary work, more than once. By attending to the hiſtory, it will be found, that the ſeparation mentioned in our text, referred to that particular miſſion of which the account is comprehended in the xiiith and xivth chapters, at the conclu-

ſion of which we are informed that the Miſſionaries returned to Antioch, "from whence they had been recommended to the "grace of God, for the work which *they fulfilled.*" Here then was an end of the ſuppoſed ordination of our text; and accordingly, at ſetting out upon another miſſion (Acts xv. 40.) we find Paul "recommended by the brethren to the grace of God" again.

The text before us, therefore, does not ſpeak of ordination, but of fervent prayer for Paul and Barnabas, in the view of their going upon one of thoſe miſſions which they fulfilled in company with each other. Whatever our Author may mean by "that "authoritative publication of the word of God, which conſtitutes "the true idea of preaching in the New Teſtament, and which "belongs excluſively to thoſe, who, by their office and miſſion, "are ambaſſadors of Chriſt;" (P. 30.) I hope I ſhall be allowed "to aſſert, that, "without the ſanction of the TEXT, we are not "warranted to conſider a pretended *authoritative publication* as "regular, or in any ſenſe valid." (P. 25.)

Beſides the radical miſtake about the meaning of the ſubject, ſeveral expreſſions and ſentiments occur in the Diſcourſe which require examination. The firſt head, is an inquiry into the character and qualifications of Miſſionaries, and includes five particulars, all very good in themſelves, but not unexceptionable in ſome parts of their illuſtration.

Thus, it is ſaid under the article of Piety, that Judas Iſcariot "was as truly an Apoſtle as Peter and John." (P. 7.) Nobody can deny the call of Judas to be an Apoſtle, or his miſſion, during the abode of Chriſt upon earth, to announce to the houſe of Iſrael the approach of the kingdom of heaven. But when we ſpeak in general terms of the Apoſtolic office, we can hardly call Judas as truly an Apoſtle as Peter and John; for none of the twelve can be conſidered as having been properly qualified for their work, far leſs as having actually performed it, until they had ſeen the Lord after his reſurrection, had received the commiſſion to go into all the world and preach the goſpel to every creature, and had been baptized with the Holy Ghoſt on the day of Pentecoſt. Such undue ſtreſs ſeems often to be laid on the caſe of Judas, as to excite concern, rather about the official credentials, than the perſon-

al character, or even the doctrine and diſcipline of a miniſter of the goſpel. Judas was no longer acknowledged as an Apoſtle, than he could, in the judgment of charity, be acknowledged as a diſciple of Chriſt. As ſoon as it was diſcovered, that he was a traitor, his "call to the office of the miniſtry" went for nothing, and the prophetical precept was obeyed, "his "biſhopric let another take." As to the error, mentioned by our Author, of connecting the validity and ſucceſs of ordinances, either with the piety or intention of the adminiſtrators; if we would only admit, that, "neither is he that planteth any thing, "neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increaſe," we could not fail to ſee, that God giveth validity to his ordinances, not becauſe of the men who diſpenſe them, but becauſe of his own gracious will which hath appointed their obſervance.

Under the ſame particular, another paſſage occurs, which, however plauſible, ſeems by no means to breathe a proper ſpirit. "Warmth of zeal, which generally creates a ſtrong prejudice in "favour of thoſe by whom it is diſplayed, is no ſure teſt of piety, "becauſe it may proceed from temperament, from imagination, "or from vanity, as well as from faith and love; and a ſhow of "eagerneſs to make public exertions for the propagation of reli- "gion is *not merely an equivocal*, but *even a ſuſpicious ſign*, eſpe- "cially in thoſe, who ſeemed, *by the obſcurity of their condition*, and "*their want of education*, to be deſtined to glorify God, *ſolely by* "*the ſilent and unobſerved diſcharge of relative duties*. A truly "pious man glows with a deſire to promote the honour of Chriſt; "but he is diffident from a ſenſe of his own weakneſs and prone- "neſs to err; and inſtead, therefore, *of courting*, *he is diſpoſed to* "*decline*, ſtations of eminence and difficulty. A ſteady practice "of religious and moral duties, accompanied with modeſty and "humility, is a more favourable ſymptom of genuine, undiſſem- "bled piety, than *ſudden fits of zeal*, and *tranſports of devotion*." (P. 8. and 9.) Far be it from me to aſcribe all zeal to piety, or to defend any thing like forwardneſs, inſtability, or enthuſiaſm; but when, in unqualified terms, a ſhow of eagerneſs for propagating the goſpel is called *a ſuſpicious ſign*, eſpecially if it appear in men of low degree; when true piety, in ſuch perſons, is abſolutely oppoſed to endeavours after general uſefulneſs; when theſe

are repreſented as a *courting* of ſtations of eminence and difficulty, and as ariſing from *ſudden fits of zeal* and *tranſports of devotion*; I own I am ſhocked alike at the ſentiments and the language. After receiving a liberal education, and being "ſolemnly ſet "apart" to the office and authority of the Clerical order, men are extremely apt to forget the rock whence they were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence they were digged. Having attained ſtations of eminence, and a reverend appellation, they too often frown upon all below them, and ſpeak loftily of the preſumption even of thoſe, who are guilty, at the utmoſt, of nothing more, than an attempt to follow their own example. If all who have devoted themſelves to what is called the ſtudy of Divinity are to be ſuſpected, becauſe they diſcovered eagerneſs to become Preachers, and that while yet in an obſcure condition, and without education; I ſhould be glad to know, why nine-tenths of all the clergy in Scotland, of every denomination, ſhould not be involved in that ſuſpicion? or why ſuſpicion ſhould fall upon Miſſionaries more than upon other men?

Reſpecting the article of knowledge, it will be allowed, on all hands, that perſons ſhould never be ſent to teach others, what they know not themſelves. It ſeems extremely raſh, however, to aſſert roundly (P. 13.) that it would "be highly imprudent and cri-"minal," to employ Miſſionaries, from whoſe labours it is nevertheleſs acknowledged poſſible to expect, "that the objects of "them would be made *babes in Chriſt*." What more did Paul accompliſh by his abode at Corinth? 1 Cor. iii. 1. The ſcriptures call upon thoſe who are born again of the incorruptible ſeed of the word, as new born babes, to deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby, if ſo be they have taſted that the Lord is gracious; and aſſure us, that out of the mouths of babes and ſucklings God will perfect praiſe. But we are here taught to undervalue the mere regeneration of men, and, unleſs we can procure Doctors in Theology who are well verſed in controverſies, to reckon it better to ſend no Miſſionaries at all.

The ſecond head of diſcourſe is wholly founded on the erroneous view of the text already expoſed. It has long been a cuſtom with preachers, not to be very ſolicitous about the primary and proper meaning of their text, provided the meaning, which they are pleaſed to affix to it, makes what is called a good ſenſe, and

be agreeable to the analogy of faith. This mode of uſing texts has, from its conveniency I preſume, been very properly termed the way of accommodation. By means of it we are enabled to accommodate ourſelves with ſcripture quotations in ſupport of any thing, and have always in our power this popular advantage, that we may ſeem to be ſpeaking by Divine authority, while in fact we may only be ſtringing together certain private and arbitrary interpretations of man. That there is an analogy of faith, or a harmony and reſemblance among the doctrines once delivered to the ſaints, is unqueſtionable; but when we can bring no better argument, for the ſenſe we put upon paſſages of ſcripture, than its correſpondence with our views of this analogy; there is reaſon to fear, that, inſtead of drawing our analogy from the Bible, we are modelling our Bible to the pattern and dimenſions of a predetermined analogy, not of faith, but of prejudice, not of truth, but of theory and ſyſtem.

Independent, however, of any diſpute about the text, the doctrine of this ſecond head may be ſhewn to be untenable. "The "church," ſays Mr. Dick, "is the organ by which our Saviour "makes known his intentions, reſpecting the ſervices of this na"ture (Miſſionary ſervices) which he demands from individuals." (P. 27.) I learn from the xviiith chap. of Matthew, that the church is the organ by which our Saviour makes known his intentions, reſpecting thoſe of its own community whom we ſhould regard as incorrigible offenders; but I would gladly know where Chriſt directs us to the church as the organ by which he makes known his intentions reſpecting the ſervices, which he demands from individuals, for the propagation of the goſpel throughout the world. When a church is properly conſtituted and employed, opportunities will be given for the diſcovery and improvement of talents and grace, and the church will by that means be enabled to follow the directions given in the Epiſtles to Timothy and Titus for a proper choice of her own office-bearers, who certainly can never exiſt but by her ordination. She will alſo feel it her duty to encourage fit perſons to propagate the goſpel among others; and when any of her members are to be ſeparated for Miſſionary labours, to ſend them away with prayer for their ſucceſs. But the queſtion is, Hath Chriſt limited himſelf to churches

as the organ of making known his intentions? To this the reply is a ſtrong affirmation. "Unleſs the interpoſition of the church be "admitted, and regarded as indiſpenſable, *there remains no certain* "*method* of diſtinguiſhing between a regular call, and the wild "claims of enthuſiaſm, or the artful pretences of impoſture." Modeſt indeed! So the interpoſition of the church is a *certain method* of diſtinguiſhing regularity from enthuſiaſm, or impoſture. Nay, there is no ſalvation from theſe evils in any other way, for there remains none other method under heaven, given among men, whereby any thing like certainty can be obtained on the ſubject. Surely it is difficult even to inſinuate ſuch monſtrous propoſitions, with ſo much as common gravity of countenance. Have we forgotten the whole hoſt of barbarous words ending in *-alian*, *-erian*, *-endent*, and *-inian?* If not, why ſhould we deſpiſe their irreſiſtible evidence concerning the organic certainty of the deciſions of the church. Proteſtants have long been unanimous in exploding Papal infallibility; but if we are merely to exchange it for that which is eccleſiaſtical; if we muſt confine ourſelves to the alternative of the hackneyed queſtion, whether infallibility ſhall be aſcribed to the Pope, or to a general council; the Chriſtian has only to read the hiſtory of both, or to attend for a few months any church court whatever, and he will probably ſee reaſon to be perfectly indifferent about the inſignificant deciſion.

But "when any man is called, in an extraordinary manner, to "the work of the goſpel, it is reaſonable to expect, that he will "be enabled to give extraordinary proofs of his commiſſion." What is meant by being called in an extraordinary manner? If it mean a man called, like the prophets or apoſtles of old, to be the organ of revealing ſecret things which have hitherto belonged unto God; if it imply a claim of inſpiration; then certainly he would need extraordinary proofs of a miraculous nature. But we are taught in ſcripture to expect no more commiſſions of this kind. To apply to the queſtion in hand, an extraordinary call muſt mean ſimply the call of a man, who has begun to preach to the world, without the concurrence of a church, and who perhaps has come to places where the brethren know not whence he may be. Now, however extraordinary this caſe may appear, it is plainly provided for in ſcripture, and is therefore ſuch as we may expect

will occur. And, what is particularly worthy of obſervation, even in this extraordinary caſe, and when the danger of impoſition reſulting from it, is directly held out, we are commanded to look for nothing more, than the ordinary proofs of a Divine commiſſion, that is, for confeſſion of the truth, and correſponding practice. For the juſtice of this remark I appeal to the following ſcriptures. "Beware of falſe prophets, ſaid Chriſt, which come to you in "ſheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye "ſhall know them by their fruits: do men gather grapes of "thorns, &c.—Wherefore by their fruits ye ſhall know them." Matth. vii. 15—20. The whole epiſtle to the Galatians is levelled againſt falſe teachers; yet although the danger of thoſe churches was certainly very great, Paul boldly bids God ſpeed to all teachers of whatever deſcription otherwiſe, who gave the ordinary proofs of a Divine commiſſion. "As many as walk accord-"ing to this rule," ſays he, (the rule of glorying *only* in the croſs) "peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Iſrael of "God." (Gal. vi. 16.) In like manner, John ſays, even where claims to inſpiration were involved in the queſtion, "Beloved, "believe not every ſpirit, but try the ſpirits whether they are of "God: becauſe many falſe prophets are gone out into the world. "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every ſpirit that confeſ-"ſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh, is of God. And "every ſpirit that confeſſeth not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the "fleſh, is not of God: and this is that ſpirit of Antichriſt, whereof "ye have heard that it ſhould come, and even now already is it "in the world." (1 John iv. 1—3.) Again, in a letter addreſſed to an individual and her family, "If there come any "unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into "your houſe, neither bid him God ſpeed: for he that biddeth "him God ſpeed, is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 10, 11.) What a pity that in none of theſe caſes, there ſhould have been a reference to the church, that by the method of certainty, the danger might have been effectually prevented for ever.

If it be ſaid, theſe rules are given to churches, as well as to individuals, I anſwer, why then do not the churches obſerve them? At the very leaſt, they require that a church ſhould not condemn a man before it hear him, and know what he doth; that it ſhould

not condemn him for the bare fact of preaching, unleſs it ſee reaſon to condemn what he ſays. If it have not ſufficient means of deciding, it may let him alone. But many churches now have determined beforehand, that if any man be found on the face of the earth, to preach without their leave, he is guilty of a crime, ſo that though he ſpeak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not their licence, or their ordination, he is become as ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal. Nay, while they avow that they know nothing at all about either him, or his principles; yet, becauſe they hear, that he has committed the unpardonable ſin of preaching the goſpel without following with them, they command all their people to let him be unto them as an heathen man and a publican.

With the firſt of our Author's concluſions, that only a church can ordain, (P. 27.) I have always, in ſubſtance, agreed. I have therefore merely to regret, that the only law of the Miſſionary Society which he quotes with approbation, that "every "Miſſionary to be ordained, ſhall be remitted for ordination, "to the particular religious connection to which he belongs," is one which that Society has never yet had it in their power to obſerve. The truth is, that the Society has never been much in favour with any of the religious connections to which either its Miſſionaries or its members have belonged. There muſt ſurely be a fault ſomewhere. I will not preſume to ſay, whether it lies with the Society or with the churches, or whether there may not have been faults on both ſides. But I believe the original diſaffection roſe from this, that ſome of the churches looked upon the Society, as Clergymen commonly do upon a lay-preacher, they knew it had been conſtituted without their leave, and therefore they behaved to it very like a ſtep-mother.

Even to the ſecond concluſion, that Miſſionaries ſhould be ordained, (P. 28.) I ſhould have no objection, provided it were meant merely to refer to the manner in which churches ſhould proceed in caſes that were known to them, and did not imply the inveſting of fallible men with the Divine right of permitting, and of courſe hindering, at pleaſure, the preaching of the goſpel, throughout the world; nor decide upon the lawfulneſs of the conduct of individuals without hearing them, or knowing what they do.

Under this article, notice is taken of the opinion of the advocates for what is called lay-preaching, to decry which ſeems, among Clergymen of every denomination, to be unanimouſly conſidered, the *preſent truth*. "I know, indeed," ſays our Author, "that it "was the opinion of the elder Socinians, and that the ſame opi- "nion is held by ſome others of a far purer faith, that every qua- "lified perſon has a right to preach the goſpel, and may under- "take that ſervice, without any other call. Before, however, "we adopt this novelty, (for a novelty that may be termed, of "which there is no veſtige in the early records of Chriſtianity,) "we muſt ſee clearer and more cogent arguments, than have yet "been produced for it." (P. 29.) Here a very odious compariſon is inſtituted between Socinians and thoſe who are acknowledged to be of a purer faith. This ſeems rather unfair; for whether the opinion in queſtion be right or wrong, it certainly contains in it, nothing that can mark an alliance with Socinianiſm, or tend to encourage that erroneous ſyſtem. The opinion itſelf is, it ſeems, a novelty. If ſo, to be ſure the controverſy reſpecting it, is at an end. And ſo indeed it would be, if aſſertion could do the buſineſs, for we are coolly told in a parentheſis, that there is no veſtige of this opinion in the early records of Chriſtianity. And we are admoniſhed further to make no reply to this authoritative declaration, unleſs we can ſay ſomething new, as clearer and more cogent arguments muſt be ſeen, than have yet been produced. If among the early records of Chriſtianity, it be permitted us to rank the New Teſtament, I think we ſhall hardly be driven to deſpair on the ſubject, by a *coup de main* like this. But before it be neceſſary for us to ſay any thing more on it, either old or new; it ſeems pretty plain from what has been ſaid already, that our opponents would need to uſe clearer and more cogent arguments for the univerſal and indiſpenſable neceſſity of eccleſiaſtical ordination, than thoſe which happen to have been produced for it in our Author's Diſcourſe. It might alſo be of uſe, in ſettling the queſtion between us, to ſhew what veſtiges are to be found, in the early records of Chriſtianity, of the Preſbyterian novelty called a *Probationer*, a man licenſed to preach upon trial, licenſed to preach but not to baptize, and at liberty to preach only where his ſuperiors appoint him. Whether is this title better or

worſe than that of a *Catechiſt?* (P. 31.) And whether are we not wholly indebted for both, to that interpoſition, which muſt at all events be admitted, and held indiſpenſable, even the certain method, the oracular organ of the church.

Our Author admits, "that if a private Chriſtian were conduct-"ed by Providence into a heathen land, it would be incumbent "upon him to endeavour to make the poor inhabitants acquainted "with the truth." (P. 29.) On this I have only to remark, that the ſame duty is incumbent on private Chriſtians even in what is called, a Chriſtian land. There is great need for it, particularly in the country in which we live, and an abundant bleſſing often attends the faithful diſcharge of it. But, ſays our Author, "his zeal would tranſgreſs due bounds, if he aſſumed the "character and authority of a Miſſionary, and ſuppoſed himſelf "entitled to plead the commiſſion, which Chriſt gave to the "apoſtles and their ſucceſſors. The inſtructions which one man "may adminiſter to another in the ſpirit of charity, are very dif-"ferent from that authoritative publication of the word of God, "which conſtitutes the true idea of preaching in the New Teſta-"ment, and which belongs excluſively to thoſe, who by their "office and miſſion, are ambaſſadors of Chriſt." (P. 30.) An authoritative publication of the word of God by commiſſion from him, is unqueſtionably the true idea of preaching in the New Teſtament. They who preach the goſpel, have, in the ſcriptures, the means of appealing to Divine authority, both for the truth of what they ſay, and for the propriety of proclaiming that truth. And if any man pretend to adminiſter inſtructions of a religious nature, without warrant from ſcripture both for their truth, and for their being adminiſtered, he is guilty of ſin. Before the ſcriptures were completed, preachers could only refer to thoſe parts of them which were yet given, and, for the reſt, had to depend upon oral inſtruction, or inſpiration. Men, acting as ambaſſadors of Chriſt, might then ſpeak as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt, while thoſe only who had a ſimilar unction from on high, could fully judge of their warrant and fidelity. But now that revelation is finiſhed, the commiſſion of the ambaſſador of Chriſt is limited to the contents of the Holy Bible, and all who have a copy of that book, and can read it with underſtanding,

are fully poſſeſſed of the means of judging how far they ought to admit the authority of what he ſays. Nor can they ſafely judge of his doctrine by any other rule. They muſt not receive it becauſe he is ordained, nor reject it, becauſe he is not ordained, but ſimply inquire what ſaith the ſcripture?

Inſtructions adminiſtered in private differ from preaching, as private does from public, in other things, in reſpect of dignity of manner, and extent of uſefulneſs; but if ſupported by Divine authority, the particular mode of communication can make no difference, either in the title of the ſpeaker, or the obligation of the hearers. Paul ſpake with the ſame authority when he taught publicly, and from houſe to houſe. A man is as much obliged to liſten to the word of God, when ſpoken to him, by his father, or brother, or neighbour, while he ſitteth in the houſe, or walketh by the way; as when he hears it declared by a clergyman, from the pulpit, on the moſt ſolemn occaſion.

The right of ſpeaking in a church, or in any ſociety, muſt depend upon the will of that ſociety. But we are not warranted by any part of the word of God, to ſay that the right of publiſhing the goſpel to the world, belongs excluſively to any office or to any order of men. No ſuch excluſive privilege belonged to prophets, prieſts, or kings, under the Jewiſh diſpenſation: no ſuch excluſive privilege belonged to apoſtles, prophets, evangeliſts, paſtors, or teachers, under the Chriſtian diſpenſation. It did belong to all theſe offices to publiſh the word of God, but not to any of them excluſively. It is manifeſt that many publiſhed the word of the Lord, and gave inſtructions concerning the law, who were not conſidered as inveſted in the ordinary way, with any of theſe offices. No man, however, is called a falſe prophet, or a falſe teacher, in the Old Teſtament, unleſs he was guilty of ſpeaking lies. This is uniformly declared to be the evidence of running unſent. (Jer. xxiii. from 9th to the end, eſpecially verſes 21, 22, 28.) In like manner, no man is called a falſe teacher, in the New Teſtament, unleſs he erred concerning the faith. (2 Pet. ii. throughout.) Some go ſo far as to ſay, that although a lay-preacher may publiſh the truth, and God may in ſovereignty ſave ſouls by it, yet that does not juſtify the man's conduct. If this be ſo, then that cannot ſanction lay-preaching, which Paul

held to be a ſufficient ſeal of apoſtleſhip, 1 Cor. ix. 2. and 2 Cor. iii. 1, 2. There cannot be produced from ſcripture, one ſingle inſtance, in which God bleſſed unwarrantable means, for the ſalvation of a ſoul. We read of falſe teachers drawing away diſciples after them, but never of their bringing diſciples to Chriſt; of their ſubverting ſouls and whole houſes, but never of their ſaving them. Chriſt will puniſh men, becauſe he was an hungered, and they gave him no meat. But where does he tell us, that he will ſay, Depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered, and, without a commiſſion that was regular, or in any ſenſe valid, ye preſumed to feed me: I was thirſty, but to you did not belong the excluſive privilege of giving me drink. If our hearts revolt at this ſtatement, we muſt either juſtify lay-preaching, wherever it is allowed to be evangelical and ſucceſsful, or elſe ſuppoſe, that a man may ſin againſt the church, without ſinning againſt the Head of the church; and from ſuch ſins many Chriſtians will feel no great anxiety to be ſaved.

There is no evidence, in the New Teſtament, that the commiſſion to go into all the world and preach the goſpel to every creature, which was given to the apoſtles, was given to them excluſively. None of the accounts of its being given ſay ſo, nor is there any thing like this, in the inſpired hiſtory of its fulfilment. It is ſaid, by our Author, to belong to the apoſtles and their ſucceſſors. It appears, however, to have been obeyed, by many alſo of their contemporaries, and that not only without any expreſs ordination from a church, but abſolutely without the knowledge of any church, or of any apoſtle, at leaſt for ſome time, after they were found to be preaching the goſpel every where to their fellow-ſinners. For the truth of theſe remarks, I beg merely that the inquirer would take the trouble to read, for himſelf, the Acts of the Apoſtles, and, to obſerve, as he goes along, whether from that hiſtory it appears, that preaching belonged excluſively to the apoſtles, or to thoſe only beſides them, who had been previouſly ordained by a church. If that work was not ſo confined then, how much leſs, in ſubſequent and degenerate ages. If we are taught any leſſon by ſcripture hiſtory it is this, that when corrup-

tion prevails among office-bearers in God's ſanctuary; when men render uſeleſs, or pervert, Divine inſtitutions; others, whom they know not and deſpiſe, are raiſed up by Providence, that the work of the Lord may not ceaſe. It is in vain to ſay, that primitive times were extraordinary, and are therefore no precedent. Are they not appealed to, on both ſides? At any rate, the importance of propagating the goſpel, and the commiſſion to do ſo, were none of their extraordinary features, but are common to the times of the goſpel, alway even to the end of the world. If miracles be pleaded, it is obvious, that men without any ordination are ſpoken of as preaching, who are not ſaid to have been endowed with miraculous gifts, and even where their qualifications are mentioned, inſtances occur, in which nothing but eloquence, knowledge of the ſcriptures, and of the way of the Lord, together with zeal, are reckoned among the number.

How, then, a man would be carried too far by his zeal, if, in adminiſtering inſtruction to heathens, he ſhould aſſign as his warrant, that Chriſt had commanded it to be done, ſeems altogether inconceivable. If we muſt admit a diſtinction between inſtructions, given in the ſpirit of charity, and an authoritative publication excluſively belonging to clerical office, I fear, it will conſiſt in this, that the latter is much more congenial with the ſpirit of domination.

Mr. Dick confirms his argument by ſome anecdotes taken from Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. As my Bible ſtops at the end of the book of Revelation, I am not very careful to anſwer in theſe matters. If, however, any one will take the trouble to look into Pictet's *Theologie Chrétienne*, Tom. 2. Liv. 14. Chap. 22. *Si la vocation au miniſtére par des Paſteurs eſt abſolument néceſſaire?* he will ſee that the ſame ſtory can ſometimes be quoted on different ſides of the ſame queſtion. It is perhaps proper alſo, that the people of this country ſhould know, that, by the confeſſion of ſome of the older, moſt eminent, and orthodox Proteſtant Divines of the ſchool of Geneva itſelf, whoſe writings have long been, and ſtill are, referred to, as text books, in our moſt reſpectable Divinity Halls, the deſpiſed cauſe of lay-preaching is eſſentially connected with the cauſe of the bleſſed Reformation from Popery;

and accordingly both are defended by them at once, and with the ſame arguments. As one proof among many of this remarkable fact, I beg leave, in addition to the reference made above, to quote a few words from the ſame book, Chap. 25. *De la Vocation des Reformateurs.* " Il paroit de ce que j'ai dit, quel jugement on doit porter de la *vocation des Reformateurs.* Si leur doctrine eſt véritable, on a tort de chicaner leur vocation; car la *doctrine* ne dépend pas de la *vocation;* mais la *vocation* de la *doctrine;* la *doctrine* n' eſt pas véritable, parce que ceux qui l' enſeignent ont été légitimement apellez; mais ceux-lá ſont légitimement apellez, qui enſeignent une bonne doctrine. Que la vocation ſoit faite dans les formes, ou qu' elle ne le ſoit point, la doctrine n' en eſt ni plus ni moins vraie; et les peuples ont fort peu d' interêt à s' en informer, pourveu qu' ils ſoient aſſurez, que ce qu' on leur enſeigne eſt la verité; perſonne n' eſt apellé légitimement à prêcher l' erreur: mais tout le monde a une légitime *vocation* d' annoncer la vérité." In the ſame chapter Monſ. Pictet expreſsly acknowledges, that the reformers were of two kinds; the one, thoſe who had already received their call in the church of Rome, the other, thoſe who had received their call from the churches, who called them, which he afterwards explains to be thoſe who had been called by congregations without a paſtor. This latter caſe is evidently that of miniſters who had no other ordination than this call of the people; and accordingly in Chap. 22. with a direct reference to the reformers, the Author pleads, that ordination by paſtors is not abſolutely neceſſary. " Si Dieu avoit attaché la validité du miniſtére à *l' ordination*, il ſeroit abſolument néceſſaire, que la vocation ſe fit par l' ordination des paſteurs; mais il eſt faux que Dieu ait attaché, a l' ordination, la validité du miniſtére." Again, " Si *l' ordination* par les paſteurs étoit abſolument néceſſaire, il pourroit arriver, que les peuples demeureroient ſans paſteurs, et que la veritable religion périroit entiérement, ſavoir lors que l' egliſe ſeroit corrompuë, et qu' elle auroit de mechans conducteurs."

If then " without the ſanction of the church (by church meaning clergy *) " no pretended call can be conſidered as regular, or

* See Note, p. 26.

" in any ſenſe valid; if the interpoſition of the church be indiſpen-
" ſable; if an authoritative publication of the word of God belong
" excluſively to the apoſtles and their ſucceſſors," by derivation of this kind alone; what muſt become of the Proteſtant Preſbyterian clergy? However reſpectable as a body, and deſervedly reſpected; however eminently bleſſed the labours of many of them have been, and ſtill are †; it is notorious, that, according to this ſyſtem, they are not the ſucceſſors of the apoſtles by a legitimate line of clerical deſcent, but at their beſt eſtate, a ſpurious brood, the offspring of a diſorderly coalition, between depoſed excommunicated prieſts, and lay-preachers, whoſe very ordination was ſtained with the ſacrilegious guilt of laical profanation. Although this happened many years ago, and is by ſome forgotten, it muſt ever ſtand as an irremediable flaw, in all claims to excluſive authority, on the part of Proteſtant, eſpecially of Preſbyterian clergymen; and all attempts to aſſert and vindicate ſuch claims, are exactly a revival of the Popiſh mode of reaſoning againſt the Reformation. It is not a little amuſing to obſerve how different ſome things are in reality from what they are in appearance. Many who heard Mr. Dick's Sermon would no doubt reckon it a defence of the indiſpenſable neceſſity of clerical ordination calculated to ſupport the diſcipline of the church of Scotland; whereas the doctrine of his Sermon, fairly followed out, and applied to the pedigree, credentials, and official privileges of every clergyman preſent, was in effect this: " Vanity
" of vanities, ſaith the preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

It appears, then, both from the early records of Chriſtianity, and the neceſſity that has occurred for reformation in the Church, that no *excluſive* right of acting as Miſſionaries, belonged to the Apoſtles and thoſe who claimed to be their ſucceſſors by regularly tranſmitted eccleſiaſtical ordination.

The rules for aſcertaining the call and qualifications of Miſſionaries are given in ſcripture, and apply equally to thoſe who are ordained, and thoſe who are not.

Theſe rules ſufficiently ſecure an able miniſtry, while they are directly oppoſed to every ſyſtem, which would obſtruct or limit the preaching of the goſpel.

† See, Account of a Revival of Religion at Moulin, by Mr. Stewart.

It has of late been often made a queſtion, " Who have a right to preach the Goſpel?" and this queſtion has been pretty fully diſcuſſed. I beg leave to ſtate another queſtion, " Who have a right to forbid the preaching of it?"

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